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History of the Rock Island Post Office.

By H. P. Simonson.

Mail facilities were first extended to what is now Rock Island, April 23, 1825, when Colonel George Davenport, who was conducting an Indian trading post near Fort Armstrong on Rock Island, was officially authorized to receive and dispatch such mail as there was to be handled. He was never sworn into the service.

John Conway was the first bona fide postmaster. He assumed the duties of that position April 4, 1834, the office being removed on that date from the Davenport home to his cabin, which was located just south of the island on the main land, in what was then known as Farnhamsburg. As the settlement grew another village, known as Stephenson, was laid out just west of Farnhamsburg. It was made the county seat and the post office was removed to within a few blocks of the site of the present federal building. It occupied rented quarters at different places within an area of two blocks till the first federal building at the present location was completed in 1896. This was occupied under the administration of Postmaster John W. Potter, when the post office occupied for the first time a government building. In 1912, under Postmaster Hugh A. J. McDonald, the structure was remodeled to meet growing needs of the post office and to furnish additional room for offices for the United States Engineer Corps for the upper Mississippi River district, which has headquarters there.

Free delivery was inaugurated in 1888 through the efforts of Major C. W. Hawes, then postmaster. The office became first class under the administration of Postmaster T. H. Thomas in 1899. It attained this rank largely through the business of the Modern Woodmen of America which, with national headquarters in the city, supplied for a number of years, an average of 40 per cent of the total business done.

The amount of business done has maintained a steady growth for the last thirty years or more.

There are sixty-seven employees connected with the office, while sixty-six railway mail clerks run into the city on the various railway lines. There are now (1916) sixty-one mails dispatched and fifty-eight mails received daily.

When free delivery was established in 1888 there were five carriers. Now there are twenty-six letter carriers in city service and one rural carrier.

At the time the building was remodeled in 1912 the Rock Island federal building represented an expenditure of $200,000 and was considered the finest government building in the State outside of Chicago.

Following are terms of the various postmasters who have served in Rock Island:

Joseph Conway	1834-1836
Miles W. Conway	1836-1840
Joseph B. Wells	1840-1841
Colonel John Buford	1841-1847
Harmon G. Reynolds	1847-1849
Elbridge R. Bean	1849-1853
James Kelly	1853-1855
William Frizzelle	1855-1856
Lewis N. Webber	1856-1858
Herman Field	1858-1861
Dr. Calvin Truesdale	1861-1865
John B. Hawley	1865-1866
Captain James F. Copp	1866-1867
Marcus B. Osborne	1867-1871
Captain L. M. Haverstick	1871-1873
William Jackson	1873-1876
Thomas Murdock	1876-1880
Major J. M. Beardsley	1880-1884
Major C. W. Hawes	1884-1888
August Huesing	1888-1889
Howard Wells	1889-1893
J. W. Potter	1893-1897
T. H. Thomas	1897-1906
H. A. J. McDonald	1906-1914
Harry P. Simpson	1914——